

Thomas Jefferson to Henry Dearborn, December 12, 1806, from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO THE SECRETARY OF WAR J. MSS. (HENRY DEARBORN.)

Dec. 12, 06.

Th. Jefferson returned to General Dearborn yesterday the letter of Mr. John Randolph, to which he thinks some of the following ideas might enter into the answer; to wit that the military establishment of the U. S. being known, it is only necessary to observe that it is nearly full; that a considerable portion of it is necessarily retained at the several forts & posts of the U. S. to preserve them & the property at them; that all the residue were on the line of frontier between the U. S. & the Spanish dominions, under the command of Genl. Wilkinson, who has also authority to call on the territories of Orleans & Mississippi for militia; that the force which Spain has on the Sabine has been represented as amounting to 1500 men, but it is believed to be considerably below that; that it is impossible to say what force she can bring from her extensive dominions West & South of us or from beyond sea; probably the less on account of the war in which she is engaged, & which endangers other parts of her possessions; that the President in his message of Dec. 2 expressed his ideas of the means of protecting our citizens in the commencement of a war & until time could be given for raising regulars; but that the right of deciding on these being with the legislature, he will rely on those means which they shall think it most expedient to provide &c. &c.